

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of authenticating data within or about a gaming machine, the method comprising:
  - providing a central processing unit for use in conjunction with the gaming machine;
  - providing a volatile programmable electronic device for use in conjunction with the gaming machine;
  - providing a configurator for use in conjunction with the gaming machine;
  - transferring a configuration file from said configurator to said volatile programmable electronic device;
  - configuring said volatile programmable electronic device with said configuration file; and
  - comparing at least a representative portion of data from said configuration file with at least a representative portion of data from a separate custodial file, wherein at least a substantial portion of said separate custodial file is identical to at least a substantial portion of said configuration file, and wherein said separate custodial file resides in a location separate from said memory device.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said configurator comprises a memory unit.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein said memory unit comprises a standard Read Only Memory.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein said memory unit comprises an Electrical Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said volatile programmable electronic device comprises a Field Programmable Gate Array.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said volatile programmable electronic device comprises a Simple Programmable Logic Device or a Complex Programmable Logic Device.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein said central processing unit, said volatile programmable electronic device and said configurator all reside within the gaming machine.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein said comparison step is performed by said central processing unit.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein said custodial file is located within said central processing unit.
10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
confirming whether said configuration file has been successfully compared to said custodial file to a sufficient level of satisfaction.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said confirming step is performed prior to said transferring step.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein said configurator is located within said central processing unit.
13. A microprocessor based gaming machine, comprising:  
a central processing unit;  
a volatile programmable electronic device;  
a configurator;  
a configuration file located within said configurator;  
a separate custodial file located within the microprocessor based gaming machine and separate from said configurator, wherein at least a substantial portion of said separate custodial file is identical to at least a substantial portion of said configuration file; and  
a comparator designed to compare at least a representative portion of data from said configuration file with at least a representative portion of data from said custodial file.
14. The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said volatile programmable electronic device comprises a Field Programmable Gate Array.
15. The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said configurator comprises an Electrical Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory.

16. The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said comparator is located within said central processing unit.

17. The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said custodial file is located within said central processing unit.

18. The microprocessor based gaming machine of claim 13, wherein said configurator is located within said central processing unit.

19. A method of authenticating data in a microprocessor based machine, comprising:

transferring a configuration file from a memory device associated with the microprocessor based machine to a volatile programmable electronic device associated with the microprocessor based machine;

configuring said volatile programmable electronic device with said configuration file; and

comparing at least a representative portion of data from said configuration file with at least a representative portion of data from a separate custodial file,

wherein at least a substantial portion of said separate custodial file is identical

to at least a substantial portion of said configuration file,

and wherein said separate custodial file resides in a location separate from said memory device.

20. A method of authenticating data in a microprocessor based machine, comprising:

- providing a CPU within with the microprocessor based machine;

- providing an FPGA within with the microprocessor based machine;

- providing a configuring EEPROM within with the microprocessor based machine;

- storing a configuration file within said EEPROM;

- storing a separate custodial file within the microprocessor based machine and separate from said EEPROM, wherein at least a substantial portion of said separate custodial file is identical to at least a substantial portion of said configuration file;

- holding the operating contents of said FPGA as substantially empty upon a shut down phase of the microprocessor based machine;

- booting up the microprocessor based machine;

- initiating a request to transfer said configuration file from said EEPROM to said FPGA;

- utilizing said CPU to compare at least a representative portion of data from said configuration file with at least a representative portion of data from a separate custodial file;

- confirming whether said configuration file has been successfully compared to said custodial file to a sufficient level of satisfaction; and

- configuring said FPGA with said configuration file.